"those enduring matinee idols"

A CHRONOLOGICAL LOOK
AT SOUND SERIALS
(1929 - 1956)

CHAPTER 20
DEC., 1972 - JAN., 1973
VOLUME 2 - NUMBER 10

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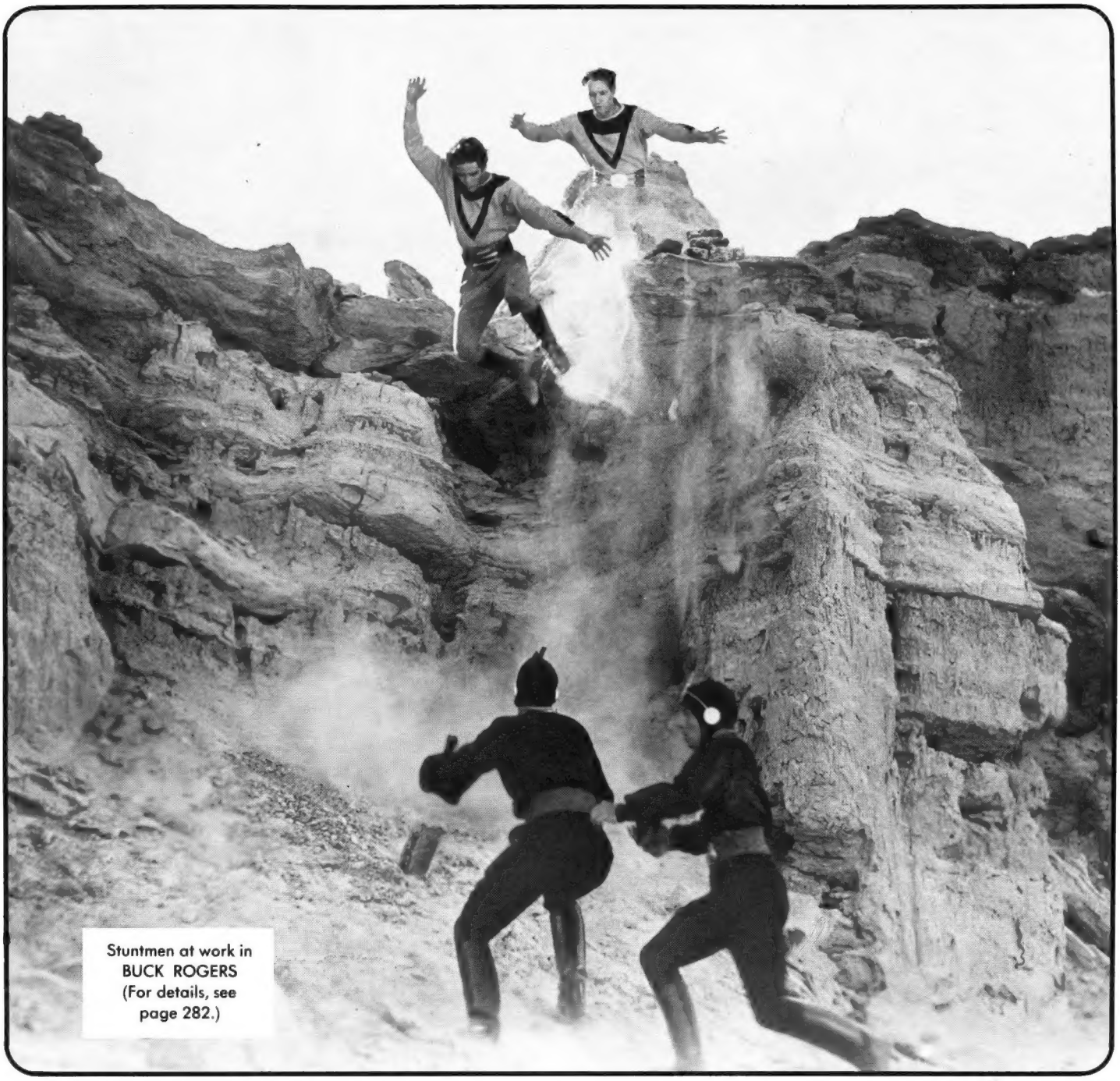


Stuntmen at work in BUCK ROGERS
(For details, see page 282.)

MASTHEAD: SATAN (the gorilla) and FANG in PERILS OF NYOKA (Republic, 1942).

BACKGROUND

The "Buck Rogers in the 25th Century" newspaper feature is owned and copyrighted by John Flint Dille (President of the National Newspaper Syndicate of America). It was he who in 1928 persuaded Philip Nowlan to convert pulp-fiction hero "Anthony Rogers" into a comic-strip idol. Then he proceeded to hire Dick Calkins to do the illustrations. Dille is the man responsible for the name change of "Anthony" to "Buck".

BUCK ROGERS, the serial (and with abbreviated title), was Universal Studios second cliff-hanger in 1939. It marked a brief departure for Crabbe from his by now familiar Flash Gordon character. However, in 1940, he returned to playing Gordon, since he was a greater attraction at the box office.

Note the billing of actors on the above lobby card. Tho Anthony Warde played the lead heavy, Killer Kane, he received no mention. Henry Brandon (as Laska), a minion of Kane's, has the larger role and is deservedly featured fourth.

Later, a feature version of BUCK ROGERS was cut from the 12 episodes and called "Planet Outlaws" as well as "Destination Saturn". Harry Revier was given credit for "new adaptation and direction."

Buck's friends in the serial, Wilma and Buddy, were carried over from the comic strip, as was his antagonist, Killer Kane. In the strip, Wilma was not above calling Buck "darling". This term of affection wisely was not used in the chapter-play.

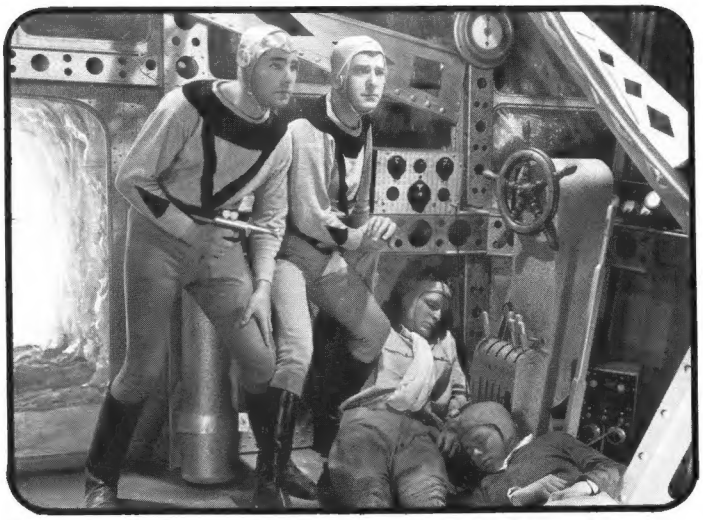
COVER

Leaping are Dave Sharpe (left) doubling for Jackie Moran; and, Eddie Parker performing for Larry Crabbe. Sharpe also had an unbilled role in the serial as a Saturnian soldier.

CHAPTER TITLES

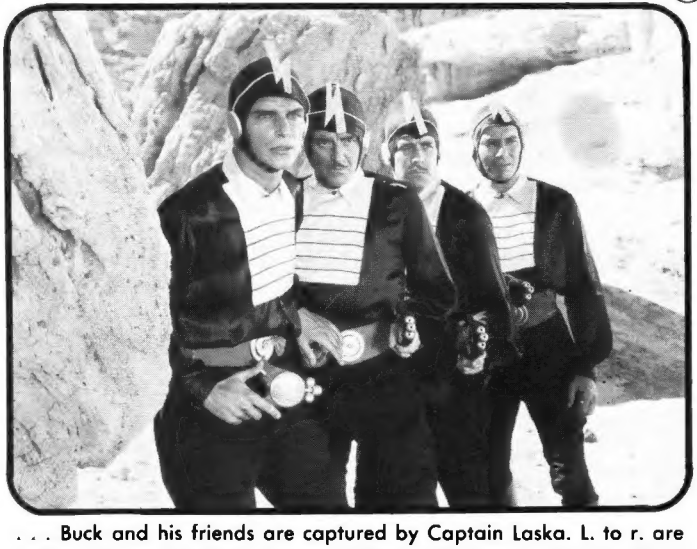
1. Tomorrow's World
2. Tragedy on Saturn
3. The Enemy's Stronghold
4. The Sky Patrol
5. The Phantom Plane
6. The Unknown Command
7. Primitive Urge
8. Revolt of the Zuggs
9. Bodies Without Minds
10. Broken Barriers
11. A Prince in Bondage
12. War of the Planets

In 1938, a dirigible sets out from New York on a flight around the world. Piloted by Buck Rogers (Buster Crabbe) and George "Buddy" Wade (Jackie Moran), it crashes on an Arctic mountain. A strange gas, "Nirvano", in their airship preserves the flyers in a state of suspended animation for 500 years.



Coming on the scene are Lieut. Lacy (Kenne Duncan, left) and Captain Rankin (Jack Mulhall). Using their "disintegrator pistols", they enter the frozen airship. Buck and Buddy are taken to Hidden City and discover the people friendly; however, most of Earth has been taken over by outlaw Killer Kane (Anthony Warde). (2)

Appointed a Colonel, Buck, with Buddy and Lieutenant Wilma Deering (Constance Moore), go to the planet Saturn for help. When their spaceship is bombed by Killer Kane's men, they use their de-gravity belts ("an outgrowth of the old parachute") to affect a safe landing. After a fight . . . (3)



. . . Buck and his friends are captured by Captain Laska. L. to r. are Laska (Henry Brandon), Patten (Wheeler Oakman), Roberts (Reed Howes) and Scott (Carleton Young). Both groups are captured in turn by the Saturnians. They manage to escape, and return to Earth in one of Lasca's spaceships. (4)

Their experiences on Saturn are reported to "scientist general" Doctor Huer (C. Montague Shaw, left). Prince Tallen (Philson Ahn, next to Shaw) plans to sign a war pact with Killer Kane, but soon learns of Kane's treachery and casts his lot with Buck and friends. (5)

The group returns to Saturn from time to time. They face danger not only from Patten and Laska, but also a primitive race known as "Zugg" men, under the influence of one of Kane's human robots (Stanley Price, wearing an "amnesia helmet that takes away a man's mind"). (6)

Buck calls upon the forces of Saturn to battle against Lasca and the Zuggs, who are in revolt. The rebellion is quelled. Later, Buck returns to Earth to battle with the despotic ruler, Killer Kane.

The Saturnians promise to help in the war against Kane. In Chapter twelve Prince Tallen and his spaceships arrive. There's an air battle. However, before Kane can attack and destroy Hidden City (entered only thru Valley 100), Rogers steals into Kane's palace. Over the protestations of The Leader, Buck places an amnesia helmet on him and orders him to broadcast over the "space radio": "Withdraw all outer atmosphere patrols to their flying fields." This is done.

"As a reward for ridding the Earth of its greatest menace, the outlaw army of Killer Kane," Buck is appointed "Colonel-in-Chief, in charge of a new air force to be organized from the remnants of Kane's flying service."

Master Wade is given a Distinguished Service Cross, and tho his youth is alluded to, he nevertheless is commissioned a "Flight Lieutenant".

A romance is suggested for Buck and Wilma at . . .

THE END

Written for TEMI By
ERIC HOFFMAN / BOB MALCOMSON
with Photo Assistance from Jim Stringham,
C. M. Parkhurst and Angel Gutierrez.

●

BACKGROUND

For their initial serial release in 1940 (March 15th), Republic drew upon one of the most enduring of all literary villains, Sax Rohmer's oriental menace Doctor Fu Manchu. Since his first appearance in book form ("The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu" — originally serialized in 1912 in "Story Teller" magazine), Fu Manchu has been the pivotal character in 13 novels and several short stories, a radio series of the '30s ("The Shadow of Fu Manchu"), his own comic strip, motion pictures, an ill-fated TV series (produced, sadly enough, by Republic Pictures) in the '50s, and, so "Variety" newspaper reports, a proposed NBC series around 1950 to feature John Carradine as Fu Manchu and Sir Cedric Hardwicke as his perennial opponent Sir Denis Nayland Smith. But only the pilot came about.

For the readers of the Rohmer novels, Fu Manchu embodied the substance of the term "The Yellow Peril". He was described as tall, with a face like that of "the fallen angel", a brow like Shakespeare, cat-green eyes and an intellect that dwarfed the average man. He was a genius in medicine, biology and science. He would also be the best known creation of Rohmer, real name Arthur (Sarsfield) Ward — 1883 to 1959. The popularity of the Fu Manchu series was best pointed in Robert Briney's articles on Rohmer in "Views & Reviews" magazine (Volume 3, issues 2 thru 4). Briney states that Rohmer "estimated that he had made close to two million dollars from the Fu Manchu books alone. Small wonder that in signing his name he customarily wrote the S for Sax as a dollar sign."

Fu Manchu was pure melodrama all the way, with the master villain given an equally sinister crew of henchmen — the dacoits, similar to thugs. Then, around 1930, he was revealed as a father when his equally evil daughter Fah Lo Suee made her appearance in "Daughter of Fu Manchu".

As with every villain, there was an equally well known opposing hero. In this case, Rohmer came up with Sir Denis Nayland Smith of Scotland Yard, and later of the British Foreign Office. Smith was described as tall, energetic, a habitual pipe smoker with a nervous habit of tugging his ear lobe when thinking. In the original first books, Rohmer made Smith part of a Holmes/Watson combination — in this case, Smith's Watson was one Doctor Petrie, who served as Smith's sounding board, partner in adventure, and chronicler of the various encounters with Fu Manchu.

Fu Manchu was a villain unique for all his nefarious intentions. He believed in honor. When an agreement was made, or his word given on a bargain, Fu Manchu would keep it, even if it meant the loss of a vital element in his plans of conquest.

Fu Manchu's serial incarnation was not a new one. The Stoll Picture Company in England produced two 15 chapter serial adventures, "The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu (1923) and The Further Mysteries of Dr. Fu Manchu" (1924) with Harry Agar Lyons as the wily mastermind.

When Republic arranged for the rights to Rohmer's character for their film, they utilized the title of Rohmer's ninth novel and made use of elements of other books in the series. The result was one of the studio's better chapter-plays, which, oddly enough, relied more on plot development than the usual destructive brawls that became Republic's trademark. Franklyn Adreon, Morgan B. Cox, Ronald Davidson, Norman S. Hall, Barney Sarecky and Sol Shor collaborated on the 15 chapter screenplay, making some changes in the concepts familiar to Rohmer fans. Dr. Petrie, instead of taking his usually active part, was reduced to Nayland's sidekick with almost nothing to do. Smith himself was stockier, older than the book idea, with a lot of the action turned over to the character of Allan Parker.

Perhaps the most striking alteration was that of the dacoits. Instead of simple thugs, the dacoits were turned into something out of a horror movie. They were men whose frontal lobes had been operated on by Fu Manchu, making them his obedient slaves, bald, with a jagged Y-shaped scar running down their foreheads. Perhaps the most gruesome of the entourage was the chief dacoit, Loki. The writers decided to make him a real terrifier and described him in their original script as not having a mouth. Obviously the censors felt this was a little too much, so Loki remained mute, and had a mouth, with two vampire-like fangs protruding from under his upper lip. Whether this was due to Fu Manchu's surgery or a natural deformity, the story did not explain.

Henry Brandon was, as usual in the case of Republic's casting, a good choice for Fu Manchu. His characterization did not fall in caricature, as has sometimes been the case with occidentals portraying Chinese or Japanese.

William Witney and John English were still at top form in keeping things moving, while Cy Feuer put together a music score that captured the spirit of the serial. The stunt work was still the best around with Dave Sharpe, Ken Terrell, Duke Green and others of the studio's stunt crew giving their all.

DRUMS OF FU MANCHU is unique for a serial in that for once the villain of the piece was allowed to emerge alive and in full possession of his faculties (unlike Killer Kane of BUCK ROGERS), as well as unpunished, thereby going against one of the ideas of the Motion Picture Production Code of Ethics. With Fu Manchu left alive, it is obvious that a sequel was intended, but never materialized. Reasons why are explained elsewhere in this Chapter of TEMI.

On November 27, 1943, a featurization of the serial was released by Republic under the same title with notice given that it was from the earlier chapter-play.

FOREWORD

"From the pages of fiction steps the most sinister figure of all time — ***Fu Manchu.*** Schooled in the ancient mysteries of the orient he is as modern as tomorrow! Ruthless, ageless, holding himself above human law, he embarks upon his most stupendous crime — the conquest of Asia! And with him comes the thunder of his summons to death . . . ***the drums of Fu Manchu.***"

Henry Brandon as Doctor Fu Manchu

THE STORY

On a stormy night, in a large city somewhere in California (later identified by a label on a packing crate in the first episode as "San Angeles"— obviously a conjugation of San Francisco and Los Angeles), Sir Denis Nayland Smith of the British Foreign Office narrowly escapes death from a hurled "dacoit knife" as he mounts the steps of a brownstone house at 621 Burnside Avenue — the residence of Doctor Petrie, physician and Smith's old friend. Inside the house, Smith tells Petrie he has come to try and stop Doctor Fu Manchu, who had been thought "run to earth" by Smith in Burma. Fu Manchu is bent on "nothing less than the conquest of Asia and the annihilation of every man who does not bow to his will." Smith explains that while in Asia (presumably Central Asia, and near and within the border of India), disguised as a Holy Man, he investigated unrest among the hill tribes, stirred up by Fu Manchu's agents, including Ranah Sang. Sang tells the natives: ". . . a new leader (will) rise among you. You have not long to wait. It is written that the coming will be in the Holy Year. And this is the Holy Year."

Smith tells Petrie that he knows Ranah Sang is in California to confer with "the most sinister secret organization in the world — the Si Fan."

At that moment, Fu Manchu presides over a meeting of the Si Fan. He has Ranah Sang tell the other members of his success in fostering "revolt in the hills." The council of seven also includes: an Englishman named Crawford, a Chinese, a Hindu, a hill chieftain from Asia and a Tartar Russian.

Fu Manchu has promised that the Sacred Sceptre will appear during the Holy Year. However, the Sceptre reposes in the tomb of Genghis Khan, whose location is unknown. Fu Manchu requires possession of three scrolls that will lead him to the tomb. He has one (obtained from Sir Lionel Barton, who he has murdered). The second is in the Dalai Plaque brought to America by Doctor James Parker, an archaeologist.

Fu Manchu announces: "I move against Doctor Parker tonight."

Parker disappears. Smith questions his son, Allan, concerning his father's activities. Allan receives a call from the secretary of Wally Winchester of the Record-Herald. He's instructed to tune-in to Winchester's five o'clock radio newscast.

As the group listens, Winchester prepares to reveal where Doctor Parker is being held prisoner. But before he can do so, the sound of drums drown out his voice.

The group goes to the radio station where they discover Winchester dead, killed by a gelatinous dart fired from the microphone diaphragm, and triggered by the sustained rhythm of the drums of Fu Manchu.

L. to R.: Allan Parker (Robert Kellard), Sir Nayland (William Royle), Lt. Wade (Harry Strang), Winchester (Norman Nesbitt) and Petrie (Olaf Hytten).

Allan recalls that his father and Professor Edward Randolph, of the Randolph Mongolian Foundation, knew Sir Lionel Barton. All set out for the Foundation so Smith can interrogate Randolph.

They arrive after a mummy case, locked, is delivered to the Foundation. When the group retires to Randolph's office, the case opens to reveal Fah Lo Suee, Fu Manchu's daughter. The girl lets Fu Manchu's "men of murder," called dacoits, and led by the fanged Loki, into the building. The drums of Fu Manchu sound, alerting Smith and his friends to an attack.

The dacoits strike, and in the confusion Randolph is put into the mummy case and spirited away.

A possible clue as to Parker's (and now Randolph's) location comes when the radio station manager tells Smith that he found carbon copies of Winchester's notes.

L. to R.: Fu Manchu, Professor Randolph (Tom Chatterton), Loki (John Merton), Doctor Parker (George Cleveland) and two dacoits (Eddie Kaye and Budd Buster).

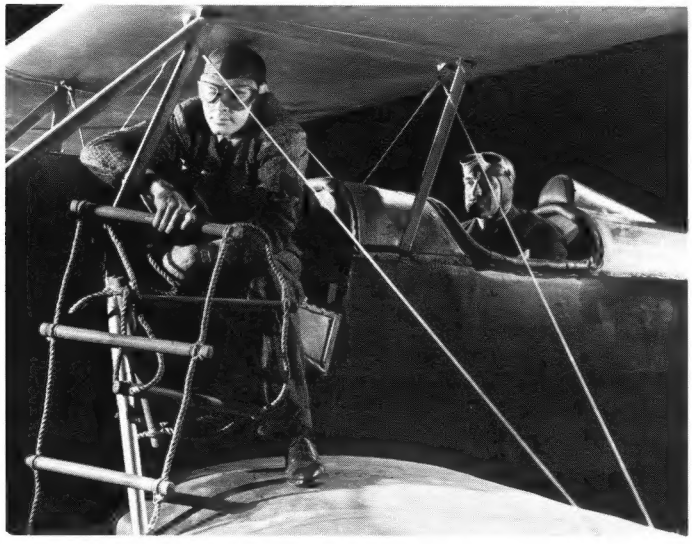
At that moment, somewhere in Chinatown, in what is obviously Fu Manchu's torture chamber (and laboratory), the Doctor is unsuccessful in getting Parker or Randolph to surrender the Dalai Plaque. Fu Manchu threatens to put Randolph to the torture of the Seven Gates to Paradise. He has his dacoits strap Randolph into a coffin-like box, divided into seven compartments with gates. Behind the gates are hungry rats who, apparently, will be allowed to enter and feast one at a time in succession.

"I have had guests who have successfully passed three of the gates, but not one has ever come thru the fourth."

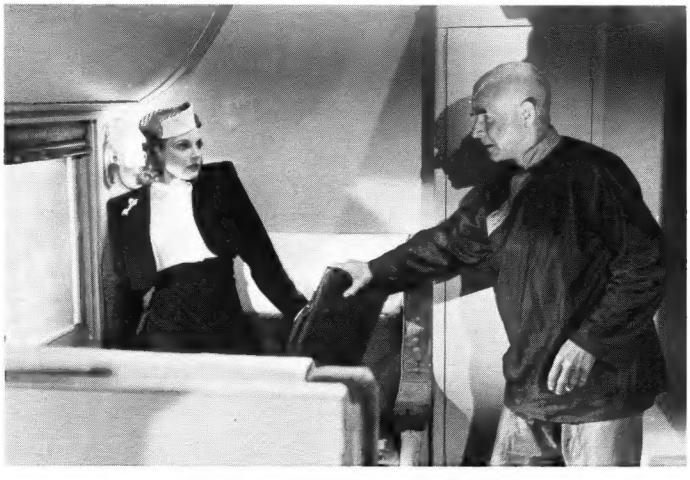
Parker exclaims: "Stop this fiendish business!" He tells Fu Manchu that Randolph's daughter, Mary, is bringing the Plaque from the Smithsonian Institute on the Sunrise Limited.

After Fu Manchu departs, Smith and Allan, having found in Winchester's notes the address of the hideout in Chinatown, arrive to rescue Randolph and Parker. However, after the senior Parker relates the information that Fu Manchu will strike against Mary, he becomes the victim of a knife hurled by a dacoit.

Fu Manchu puts his plan to obtain the Dalai Plaque into motion and has dacoits board the Sunrise Limited.



Meanwhile, Allan and Smith have caught up with the train in a biplane and young Parker drops onto the train from a rope ladder, then enters the passenger car just as a dacoit opens the door to Mary's compartment and grabs a briefcase containing the Dalai Plaque.



Mary Randolph (Luana Walters).

After locking Mary in, the dacoit starts for the rear observation platform and runs into Allan. They fight. At the same time, another train is heading toward the Sunrise Limited on the identical track. The trains collide! End of Chapter one.

But Allan, meanwhile, has regained the briefcase from the dacoit before knocking him off the platform. He releases Mary and the two leap from the doomed Limited before the collision.

Back at Fu Manchu's hideout, the dacoit who failed is given unusual punishment. He's sent plummeting thru a trap door into a huge tank below the house floor and dragged to his death in an underwater grotto by a giant octopus.

Determined to retrieve the Plaque before Sir Denis and his friends can learn its significance and translate it, Fu Manchu sends one of his dacoits to the Randolph museum. Climbing up the side of the building, the dacoit holds a special bracelet at the window to Randolph's office while Allan, Sir Denis, Petrie and Randolph are discussing the Plaque. The wrist piece contains a jewel that acts like an occult TV camera, relaying what is transpiring in Randolph's office to Fu Manchu's Water Mirror, which, for all intended purposes, is a TV receiver. But Allan spots the dacoit's arm and captures him. He's taken to Randolph's office. Bound, the dacoit is still able to turn the bracelet towards the group as they discover a secret compartment in the Plaque, containing a small papyrus scroll. Fu Manchu learns that the scroll is to be taken to Doctor Humphrey of the International Geographic Society for translation. Fah Lo Suee is sent ahead and manages to dope Humphrey with a drugged (Incense of Obediance) cigarette. His mind now submissive to Fu Manchu's will, Humphrey welcomes Allan and Randolph and, after being given the scroll, leaves them to get a blackboard for purposes of translating the ancient language on the papyrus. Instead, he locks them in the office and is taken in a dacoit driven car to Fu Manchu. Allan spots this and, getting out via a fire escape, manages to get onto the car's running board unseen. Once at Fu Manchu's hideout, he phones Sir Denis — then enters the building.

Holding Fu Manchu at gunpoint until Sir Denis arrives, Allan is unaware of Fu Manchu's hand reaching the control button (on the arm of his chair) that sends him plunging into the depths of the hidden pool. Within moments, Allan is struggling for his life with the giant octopus. Conclusion of the second episode.

Sir Denis and Petrie arrive at the house, forcing Fu Manchu and his daughter to take refuge behind a secret panel. The duo hear the splashing, and Sir Denis finds the release button for the trap door. The two men see Allan's predicament and manage to shoot the huge sea beast. Along with Humphrey, and with the papyrus scroll, Allan, Sir Denis and Petrie depart.

Still bent on obtaining the scroll, Fu Manchu reasserts control over Humphrey's mind and sends Allan and Mary to the Randolph Institute to get "the 6th Cunieform Key." Mary is kidnapped by dacoits and Fu Manchu meets with Sir Denis, Petrie, Allan and Randolph at midnight offering Mary's safe return for the scroll.

Smith, procuring Fu Manchu's word that he will keep his part of the bargain, agrees. The trade is made in a plane in mid-air, with Mary locked in the rear compartment. The girl, determined to wreck Fu

Manchu's plot, has broken the plane's fuel line. After giving Allan and Mary parachutes, Fu Manchu learns what Mary has done (from the dacoit pilot).

Enraged at the betrayal of the agreement, Fu Manchu takes back the parachutes and he and the pilot prepare to bail out, the Doctor reminding Allan and Mary that "In my country, honor is a sacred thing . . . happy landing!" The two youngsters are left in the fuelless plane which Allan tries to nose over the mountains to avoid a death-crash. The plane, however, loses a wing on some rocks and crashes amidst rocky terrain. Chapter three cliff-hanger.

The two manage to survive and flee from the plane before it bursts into flames. At Randolph's, Smith tells Allan that a photostatic copy had been made of the scroll, which revealed that the vital third document was in the Kelba Khan tomb, the contents of which were brought to America by Doctor Chang, an importer. Smith phones Chang to warn him of Fu Manchu's possible attack. Too late! Fu Manchu and Loki enter Chang's quarters and make him their prisoner. They attempt to force him to reveal where the Kelba Khan document is.

Fu Manchu, Doctor Chang (Philip Ahn), Loki.

Only the arrive of Smith and Allan stops Fu Manchu from continuing his plan of "questioning". Chang relates to the two that the document tells of an inscription in the Temple of the Blind Dragon, requiring the Kardac Segment to complete it. The Segment is in the hands of Ezra Howard, an eccentric recluse in Sonoma (California). Spotting some dacoits spying on them, Smith and Allan pursue their car to a building in Chinatown. Separating from Allan, Smith is attacked by a dacoit on some stairs, and the two fall into the street below. Allan, meanwhile, is captured and tied to a table, which is raised upwards towards a swinging pendulum-like blade. The table inches higher and higher for the death stroke of the blade at the end of Chapter four.

But Sir Denis, regaining consciousness, enters the room and covers Fu Manchu and his dacoits, ordering them to halt the pendulum in time. The lights are turned out and Fu Manchu and his men escape. Upon leaving the building, Smith and Allan are attacked by Dowlah Rao, a dacoit (and one of the few identified by name). He's subdued, subsequently manacled, and taken in one of Fu Manchu's own vehicles by Allan and Smith to the Randolph Foundation where he is left in the car to wait to be taken to police headquarters. The dacoit manages to switch on the short-wave set in the automobile and contact his master, who orders him to leave it on transmitting. Later, Allan and Smith spot the open radio and concoct a plan to stop Fu Manchu from getting the Kardac Segment. They casually "devulge" the fact that the Segment is at the Historical Museum. Allan is to go there while Smith takes care of the captured dacoit.

Fu Manchu moves quickly, substituting his men in purloined costumes among the historical statues. Allan has secured the help of Anderson, the curator. But one of the disguised dacoits has a bracelet (with TV transmitter) and Fu Manchu, observing via his Water Mirror (TV receiver) learns of the trick. The dacoits, alerted by the drums of Fu Manchu, attack and only after a wild melee are defeated.

Dacoit in dark robe (Ken Terrell); Lt. Corrigan holding "Tommy" (Lee Shumway).

Allan races off to warn Smith at Ezra Howard's house that Fu Manchu knows their plans. But other dacoits manage to make off with the Segment. Allan comes upon them, and in the ensuing fight (during a violent rain storm) the Kardac Segment is dropped in mud, leaving a perfect imprint in the soft earth. Smith sees the impression and has a plaster cast made. Randolph affirms that the stone is the vital key to the tomb of Genghis Khan, but must be fitted into the altar of the Temple of the Blind Dragon to obtain the needed instructions for locating the tomb. In a move to prevent Fu Manchu from making use of the Kardac Segment, Sir Denis Nayland Smith has a dragnet thrown out at all exit points in the country.

Allan Parker and Professor Krantz (John Picorri).

When Fah Lo Suee is unable to charter a plane, Fu Manchu concocts a plan that includes the successful kidnapping of Allan. Using the talents of Professor Krantz, a renegade doctor, Fu Manchu has a rubber mask likeness of young Parker's face created and donning it, becomes an exact double for Allan. Mimicking his voice and wearing Allan's cloths, Fu Manchu prepares to join his daughter to leave the country.

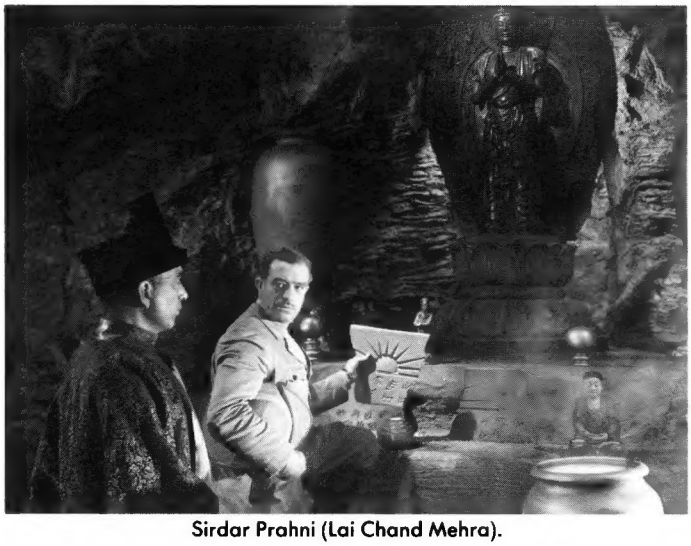
An investigation of the inscriptions on the duplicate Kardac Segment reveals that the next clue to the tomb of Genghis Khan is in the Temple of the Blind Dragon in the Nihila Hills. Smith and Allan plan to fly to Asia via Clipper, but their plans are found out by Crawford (the Englishman member of the Si Fan) who informs Fu Manchu via cablegram in Mexico, and then books passage on the flight so he can make an attempt to finish off Smith with a deadly lizard. But the attempt fails, and Allan subdues him in a fight and takes his place when a messenger from the Si Fan comes to take him to a meeting of the secret society. All goes well for Allan (disguised with black hood and cape) until Crawford appears at the cult's temple and hands Fu Manchu a written warning.

At end of table is Crawford (George Pembroke).

Exposed, Allan attempts to flee—and in doing so shoots Crawford. The noise alerts two dacoits. The conclusion of Chapter seven has Allan backing out of the room toward a curtained doorway. Unknown to him, dacoits stand at each side of the exit with raised swords, poised for the kill.

Fortunately, Sir Nayland, who had been following Crawford, appears in time to save Allan by shooting the two dacoits.

Later, Smith and Allan, joined by Petrie, Randolph and Mary, set out for the Temple of the Sun (formerly called the Temple of the Blind Dragon). But Mary is kidnapped by Fu Manchu. The group arrives at the Temple, welcomed by Sirdor Prahni, the high priest. Allowed to put their copy of the Kardac Segment in the Temple altar, Randolph now has the complete directions to the tomb of Genghis Khan.



Sirdar Prahni (Lai Chand Mehra).

But Fu Manchu, with the real Segment, arrives, and, concealing Fah Lo Suee behind the statue of Kardac, the sun goddess, claims that he has the genuine Segment. Legend says that when the Segment is returned, the idol of Kardac will speak. Fah Lo Suee provides the voice, which demands a sacrifice for the desecration of the shrine by the white men. At this pronouncement, Fu Manchu produces Mary, hypnotized and in sacrificial robes. Commanded to lie down on the altar table, Mary is to be sacrificed by use of a huge crystal that focuses the rays of the sun into a destructive light beam. As Smith and the others watch in horror, the beam of light moves toward Mary (slowly, relentlessly, destroying in its path metal objects on the altar) until a flash indicates that the girl has been annihilated. End of Chapter nine.

But Allan comes to the rescue, overpowering a couple of Temple guards, grabbing a rifle and shattering the deadly prism before the ray strikes Mary. Smith manages to expose Fu Manchu's daughter as the voice of Kardac. The tables turned, Fu Manchu and his group escape under the cover of gas bombs.

Thru a portable transmitter hidden in the Temple, Fu Manchu overhears the altar translation by Randolph, telling him that the tomb of Genghis Khan is at the end of a trail starting at Dragon Gorge. Prahni, the high priest, tells Smith the way to it.

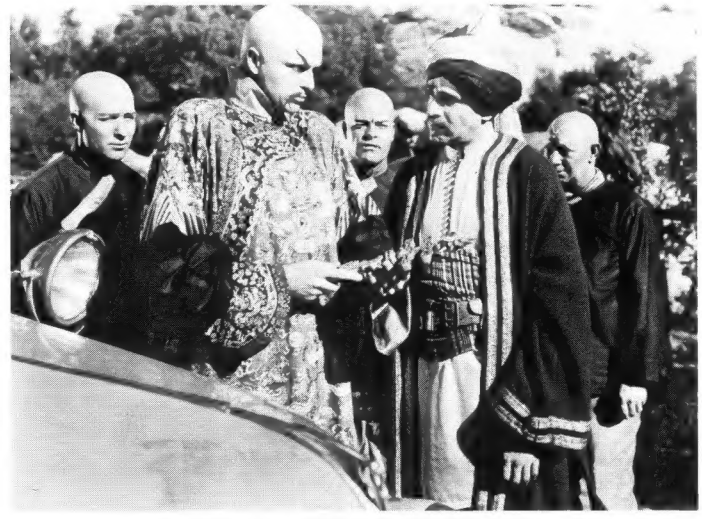
In Chapter eleven, Allan enters the tomb and finds the box containing the Sacred Sceptre. Prior to this, Fu Manchu has been captured and Sir Denis announces his intention to turn the Sceptre over to the High Lama in Brahnapur. But Fu Manchu replies cryptically that the decision "may still rest with Genghis Khan" and points out an inscription in the outer tomb which he translates: "Only in death did I enter here. For you who enter otherwise, forever shall you remember and forever regret."

When Allan opens the box, he releases a mechanism that closes the inner tomb door, trapping him (alone) inside. Deadly gas fills the tomb. But Allan, slumping against a wall, finds a secret door leading to a ledge over a lake. He dives into its depths carrying the Sceptre box with him.

Fah Lo Suee (Gloria Franklin).

Fah Lo Suee, informed of her father's capture, manages to capture Allan. She intends to trade him for her father and drives to the Temple of the Sun, Allan guarded by two dacoits. But Fu Manchu has been rescued by Loki and sets a trap to stop any possible reinforcements. Unaware that his daughter is in charge of the situation in the station wagon, Fu Manchu sets off a blast sending the car hurtling from the road to roll down a bank. Allan survives, while Fah Lo Suee is killed.

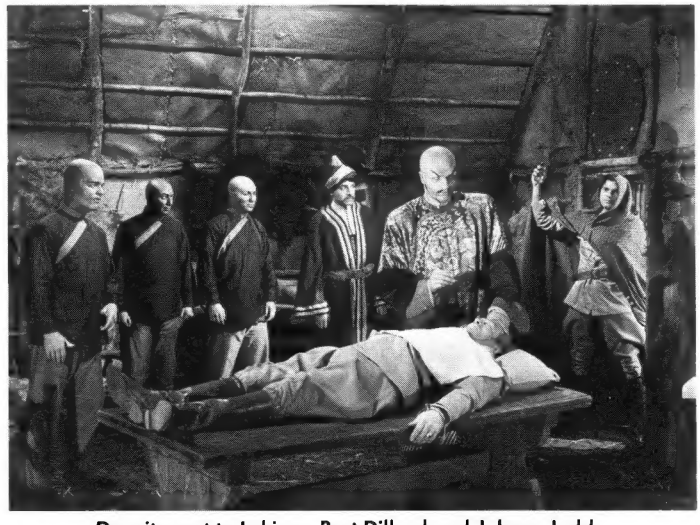
The Sacred Sceptre is taken to Fort Branapuhr by Allan. However, Fu Manchu, disguised as an emissary from the High Lama, gets into the Fort and manages to steal it. Or so he thinks. The box is empty. Later one of his dacoits is successful in obtaining the Sceptre. With it, Fu Manchu can now begin his campaign of conquest. Smith decides to follow one of the dacoits who might lead (them) to Fu Manchu. The trail leads to the Brahnapur Temple of the Si Fan where the remaining members of the council are captured. Fearing that Fu Manchu, now hiding in the Nihala Hills, might try to break out with the Sceptre, Major Carlton (in command at Fort Brahnapur) has three passes from the hills guarded. Chief Khandar of a friendly Tartar tribe is asked to help find Fu Manchu, yet when they do find the mad oriental's camp, Fu Manchu gains the chieftain's allegiance with the Sceptre of Genghis Khan. Their belief in the prophecy of the Holy Year causes the Tartars to obey Fu Manchu's order to bring Nayland Smith, alive, to the Tartar camp.



Fu Manchu and Khandar (Paul Renay).

Allan and Smith, with two soldiers, are attacked. Allan is shot from his horse, while Smith is captured and brought to Fu Manchu who intends to have Smith help him get thru the blockade. Smith says he will not, but Fu Manchu says he will . . . as a dacoit! The fiendish oriental prepares his surgical instruments to operate on the struggling Englishman, who soon is put under anesthetic. Fu Manchu gloats: "Sir Nayland Smith, dacoit slave of Fu Manchu." As Chapter 14 ends, he lowers a scalpel toward Smith's head.

However, Allan (apparently only stunned, and not wounded) follows Smith and his captors to a hut where, using a bottle of quinine, saying it is nitroglycerine, he halts the operation and forces Fu Manchu to release Smith.



Dacoits next to Loki are Burt Dillard and Johnny Judd.

Smith, still weak, stumbles against Allan, causing the bottle to fall, revealing the hoax. The two manage to escape after the hut walls are set ablaze from an overturned Bunsen burner. But Fu Manchu manages to flee with the Sceptre.

Fu Manchu pulls a coup by using the searchlight of his station wagon to project the shadow of the Sceptre into the sky. He orders Khandar to set up an ambush at Ranghi Pass for Major Carlton's troops. He then tells Khandar to have the tribes look to the skies.

Khandar alerts his followers: "Men of the hills, the hour of prophecy has struck. Tonight we ride to drive the hated white men from our lands. The Sceptre of Genghis Khan will appear tonight. Look!" (The Sceptre can be seen silhouetted against the sky.) "Fate has delivered the foreign soldiers into our hands. They march tonight thru Ranghi Pass. We will wait in ambush and descend upon them like wolves!"

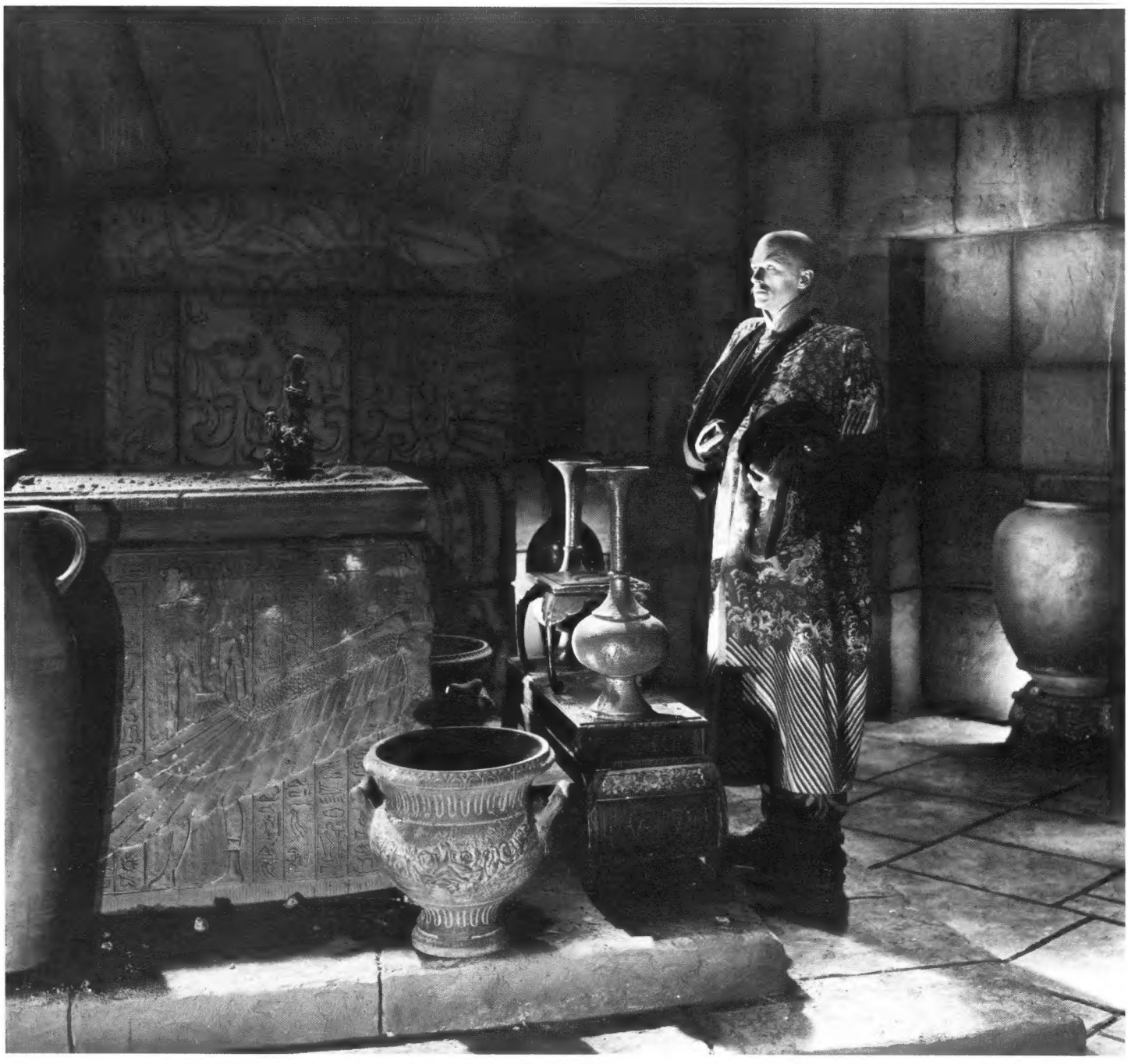
And that they do! However, it is not long before Allan manages to shoot out Fu Manchu's searchlight, and put to final rest several dacoits. With the shadow of the Sceptre gone, the hillsmen are without an incentive to continue fighting. Fu Manchu tries to escape in his station wagon. Allan jumps on the car roof and lowers himself to the running board where he struggles with the Doctor for his gun. The car goes out of control and Allan jumps off the running board before the vehicle crashes down a steep cliff with Fu Manchu inside.

Later, the High Lama praises Sir Denis and Allan (his arm in a sling) "For the blessings of peace and contentment . . ."

And for all of his acts of murder and nefarious deeds, Doctor Fu Manchu is allowed the last word. He returns to the tomb of Genghis Khan, his arm also in a sling, and bows before the Khan's sarcophagus intoning: "Oh, greatest of Khans. I stand before you in all humility. Your Sacred Sceptre reposes in the hands of my enemies. My plan to conquer this land as you conquered it has been burned away in the rifle fire of alien soldiers. But there will dawn another day — a day of reckoning when the forces of Fu Manchu will sweep on to victory. This I pledge you!"

CHAPTER TITLES

1. Fu Manchu Strikes
2. The Monster
3. Ransom in the Sky
4. The Pendulum of Doom
5. The House of Terror
6. Death Dials A Number
7. Vengeance of the Si Fan
8. Danger Trail
9. The Crystal of Death
10. Drums of Death
11. The Tomb of Genghis Khan
12. Fire of Vengeance
13. The Devil's Tattoo
14. Satan's Surgeon
15. Revolt



REMINISCING WITH HENRY BRANDON

By Earl Blair, Jr., Marc Schooley,
Glenn Kessler, Ken Finnerty and Roy Bonavig

●

EDITOR'S NOTE

This interview took place in Houston, Texas when Mr. Brandon was appearing on stage there with Dame Judith Anderson in Euripides' Greek tragedy "Medea".

●

Q: How many serials did you make, Mr. Brandon?

HB: Four in all. At Republic I did DRUMS OF FU MANCHU. Earlier at Universal, I played the "Cobra" in JUNGLE JIM with Grant Withers, and they had me as a heavy in SECRET AGENT X-9, and the heavy's assistant in BUCK ROGERS. Since I had already done two for them, and they liked me, they called me and said: "We'd like for you to play the heavy's assistant."

I said: "Well, how about the heavy?"

They said: "Well, the heavy works one day, and the heavy's assistant works three weeks. Which part did you say you wanted?" So I played the heavy's assistant!

Q: So you always played the villain then?

HB: Yes, I was always the villain. I was very young at the start. All of twenty-one. I played the villain in "Babes in Toyland" (released in 1934, and called "March of the Wooden Soldiers" when reissued) with Laurel and Hardy.

Q: How did you get the part of Fu Manchu?

HB: That's a very funny story. They sent for me when they were doing . . . who was that masked guy? . . . Zorro! They were doing a Zorro serial (ZORRO'S FIGHTING LEGION). I went in and they were sitting there, about six of them . . . producers and directors. They always had two directors; one man couldn't do it all — they would alternate. They looked me over for about two or three minutes, asked a few questions. Suddenly they all said: "That's it! He's right!" And I walked out and I said to myself: "I'm going to play a hero. Finally, after all those villains." And then I went home and called my agent, and he said: "You're not getting that one. They cast you in the following serial." That's how I got it . . . by going to see about playing a nice guy.

Q: Was the make-up for your Fu Manchu role very difficult?

HB: Very, very difficult job. The gateman, the make-up man, and I were the first ones on the lot. We got there about 4:30 in the morning. See that? (He pointed to a still from DRUMS OF FU MANCHU.) That's a complete rubber cap. Well, it's not rubber, it's something like rubber, and that had to be put on very carefully. If he didn't have me scrunch up my forehead, the cap would buckle during the day.

Q: It certainly was an excellent make-up job.

HB: Well, it was designed by the greatest make-up man they ever had in Hollywood, Morris Sidermann. He invented all this rubber-type stuff they're using now.

Q: Did you have any stunts in that serial?

HB: Not too many in that one. No, Fu had other people to do the action for him. As you remember, he had those dacoits.

Q: Were you killed at the end of that serial?

HB: No. I think in the last shot I was in front of the tomb of Genghis Khan, and I swore that I would carry on. No, they didn't want to kill him, because they planned to do a sequel.

Q: Why didn't they do the sequel?

HB: They didn't do it because of too many protests from parent-teacher organizations, oriental organizations, and kids wetting their beds from nightmares.

Q: What did you pattern your role from? Did you read Sax Rohmer's novels?

(Continued on next page.)

A scene from JUNGLE JIM (Universal, 1937). L. to R. are Evelyn Brent (as Shanghai Lil), Brandon, Al Bridge, Paul Sutton and Bryant Washburn. This serial was covered in TEMI No. 10, pages 130 and 131.

HB: I'll tell you actually what I did. I knew they wanted something bizarre, and if your accent is too authentic, you're hard to understand. You remember they used to have a radio program called "The March of Time". They had actors doing all the news using different foreign accents. Well, there was one guy on there who did the Chinese accent, that I thought was amusing. It wasn't terribly honest, but it sounded oriental. So I used to listen to him and I picked up his accent. It was clear and the kids could understand everything I said. That was the important thing.

Q: Did you expect any adult audiences?

HB: No, it was mainly for kids. I used to go and see the serials. In fact, one time there was a group of kids sitting behind me during a very scary scene from DRUMS. One of the heroes was in disguise at my secret society meeting, the Si Fan, and we're around my council table. All my leaders from all over the world were there. He's there with a cowl over his head. Somebody comes in and passes me a note that says a spy is at the far end of the table. I got up slowly and put my hands in my sleeves . . . you know, I hid things in my sleeves. This one little kid about eight started to bawl. Then his brother and sister said: "Close your eyes, Jimmy. It'll all be over in a second." The kids were screaming with terror by the time I reached over and pulled the cowl off his head. Of course, the kids never knew the "real" Fu Manchu was sitting in front of them. They didn't recognize me without my make-up.

Did you know that after about three episodes they started applauding Fu Manchu? He's the smarter . . . you see. They go for the smart guy. They didn't care whether he's good or bad.

Q: Since the serials were made mainly for kids, were they done "tongue in cheek" or were they done seriously?

HB: We never played them tongue in cheek. We played them larger than life, but with complete sincerity.

Q: What was the average shooting schedule on a serial?

HB: Some were twelve and some were fifteen episodes. They'd shoot them in about three or four weeks. (DRUMS utilized a schedule of 48 days.) We'd do eighty-five set-ups a day. In an average feature they got about five if they were lucky. The scripts were about as thick as a telephone book. They would have identical sets in the various scenes, but the kids would have forgotten, you see. For example, we would shoot scene fourteen from episode one, then stay right there and shoot scene thirty-eight from episode seven.

Q: Can you recall any of the other cast members in DRUMS OF FU MANCHU?

HB: Oh, yes. Gloria Franklin. Between takes on the set, I played cards with her and her mother. Gloria was only in her late teens at the time.

And I recollect my first sequence together with Philip Ahn. We both broke up hysterically as the camera rolled and director Jack English, perturbed that a take had been ruined, demanded to know what was so funny. Ahn trying to enact an Occidental role while I attempted an Oriental was more than either of us could bear without hysterical laughter at the incongruity of it all.

Q: You mentioned earlier the fact that there were two directors.

HB: Yes, Bill (William) Witney and Jack (John) English. English was more at ease with the dialogue while Witney was the action man. I have great admiration for Bill Witney. He would stay up all night when we were on location and map out everything in his head. The following day, he would then shoot all his scenes without referring to a script. English played everything safe and would usually only shoot one take to force the film editors, who he apparently didn't trust, to use things the way they were shot whereas Witney would provide a variety when he could and was constantly experimenting with such things as angles to create new moods.

Q: Do you remember any anecdotes?

HB: Well, one anyway. The Confucious sayings were all the rage at that time, and the cast and crew came to expect a new variation on the theme, Fu Manchu Say, every day. My biggest laugh was: "Fu Manchu say . . . Chinese chain only as strong as its weakest chink."

Q: Rumor has it that you were to play the title role in MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR SATAN. True?

HB: Yes. I was to have played him after Fu Manchu. The make-up man and I had it all worked out. I was going to wear slight horns, a goatee, and have a club foot. It was a very exciting thing. Then I got a big picture, "Shepherd of the Hills" (starring John Wayne) for Paramount. I went to Republic and said: "If you will match the salary Paramount is offering me, I will play Doctor Satan for you, and to hell with the big picture." Of course, everybody thought I was nuts to turn down a big technicolor picture for a serial. They wouldn't match the salary. They got Eduardo Ciannelli, and he just walked through it. It's a shame, because we were going to hoke it up for the kids. You know, something different.

Below is a scene from SECRET AGENT X-9 (Universal, 1937) with Brandon and Scott Kolk. Coverage was given the serial in TEMI No. 11, pages 142 and 143.

MEN OF ACTION

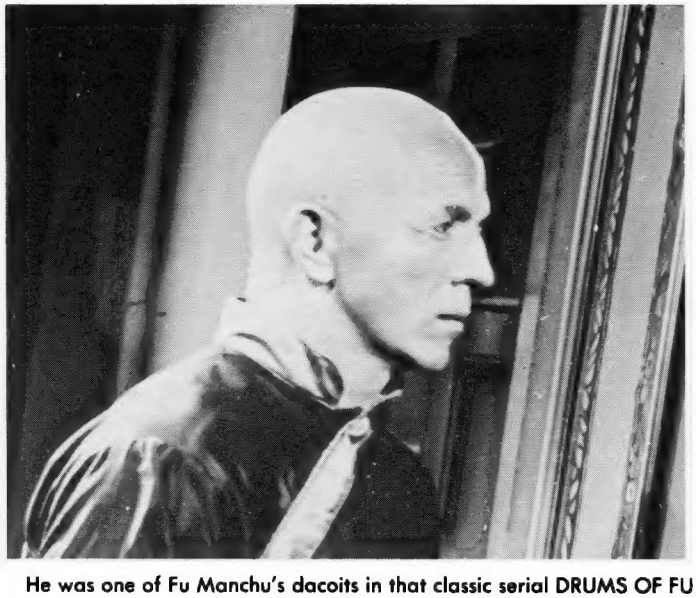
By HARRY SANFORD / Photo Assistance John Hagner and Jim Stringham

William "Duke" Green was a superb athlete who could do just about everything and anything: swim, high dive (not necessarily into water), and tumble. Those who recall Duke's spectacular fights and falls in many of the classic Republic serials will certainly attest to that fact.

His career in pictures really began back in 1925 when he obtained a job doubling for John Barrymore in "The Sea Beast", and he nearly got drowned for his efforts thru the carelessness of an assistant director. Carelessness was to happen again in later years with somber and distressing results. Barrymore took a fancy to Duke and his ability to perform amazing feats of athletic skill. Duke worked in a number of the actor's films with "Don Juan" being the standout. In the deadly rapier and dagger duel between Barrymore and villain Montague Love, Duke, doubling for Love, took a sensational fall off a balcony and landed on the stairs below. Later doubling Barrymore he engaged in a combined horse chase and sword duel with two heavies while holding onto the heroine (Mary Astor, but really a dummy dressed up to resemble her), then vanquishing the evil pair he jumped his horse into Lake Sherwood, a favorite location site near Hollywood used by many studios for shooting exterior scenes.

For the next 25 years Duke was one of the most sought after stuntmen in the game. Like his own life, it would take more space than allotted to tell all that he did. He was with Buck Jones for years, doing fights, chases, leaps . . . as only Duke Green could do, and he earned the sobriquet ***Crazy Duke***, as well as ***The Leaper***. He doubled Jack Oakie in "The Call of the Wild", J. Carrol Naish in "Robin Hood of El Dorado", Humphrey Bogart in "Action in the North Atlantic", Edward G. Robinson in "Brother Orchid" and so on. And, he was one of the highly skilled corps of stuntmen who did the devastating saloon brawl in "Dodge City", crashing first through a staircase and then later going headfirst into the street through a stained glass window.

But to readers of TEMI, great and colorful as these activities were, it is Duke Green's work in serials that is the focal point, and it is a point well taken. Though he had done serial work at other studios, Duke's real highlights in the cliffhangers came to the forefront at Republic.



He was one of Fu Manchu's dacoits in that classic serial DRUMS OF FU MANCHU. Then what is considered the golden age of cliffhangers, Duke, much in demand everywhere and working at every studio in town, did masterful service in the little studio in San Fernando Valley. Heavies, and doubling for actors playing heavies, was Duke's lot in serials. The only time he played a good guy—civil engineer Spencer Harvey in MANHUNT OF MYSTERY ISLAND—he was killed in the first reel by Kenne Duncan, whom he doubled throughout the entire serial, which only goes to prove neither crime nor virtue pays off if the script calls for your quick and sudden demise.

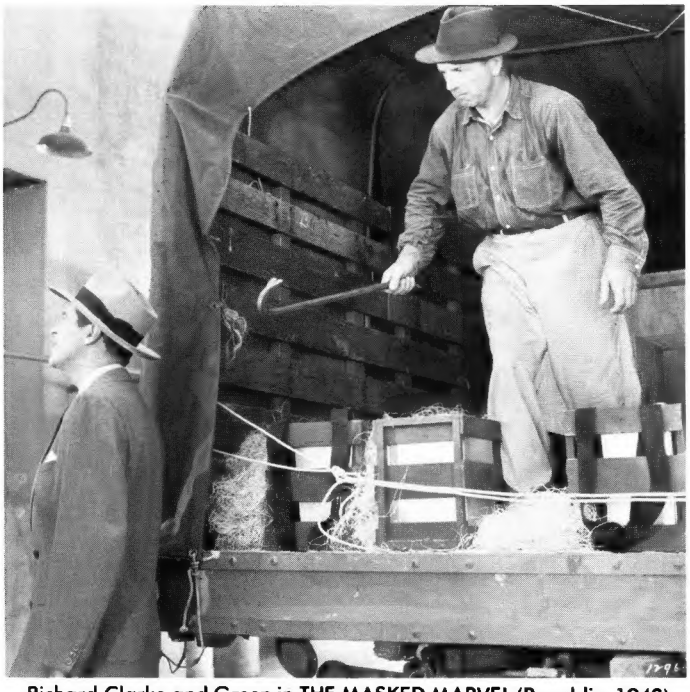
Green doubling Kenne Duncan and, on floor, Dale Van Sickle doubling Richard Bailey in MANHUNT OF MYSTERY ISLAND (Republic, 1945).

He battled Duncan Renaldo (doubled by Dave Sharpe) in KING OF THE TEXAS RANGERS; got knocked off a platform in a warehouse by Kane Richmond (doubled by Sharpe) in SPY SMASHER. When Allan Lane in KING OF THE MOUNTIES battled villainous Anthony Warde, the ***real stuff*** was done by Tom Steele and the Duke. When Spencer Bennet came to Republic he solo directed what many think were the two most action packed serials ***ever*** filmed, SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA and THE MASKED MARVEL. As was the case Tom Steele usually doubled the lead heroes if they were on the tall side. Rod Cameron, all 6'5", fitted AFRICA right enough as Rex Bennett. It might be added that he earlier played the same character in G-MEN vs. THE BLACK DRAGON.

The chief thug henchman serving the Nazi villains in AFRICA was a nasty fellow called Wolfe, well acted by Frederic Brunn. But when it came to the fights and chases, it was the Duke in burnoose who provided the mayhem and total set destruction. And this was just doubling Brunn. As an Axis thug, Duke had his own fights to do.

Green and Rod Cameron in SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA (Republic, 1943).

In THE MASKED MARVEL Duke again doubled Tony Warde, as well as playing heavy roles throughout the serial, breaking everything in sight. "What made Republic serials so good," Duke recalls, "was the care and preparation that went into them. They had top notch special effects (headed by the brothers Lydecker), and cameramen (William Nobles, Reggie Lanning, William Bradford, John MacBurnie and Bud Thackery) plus the directors! Nobody knew more about making people and objects move than Bill Witney, John English and Spencer Bennet. That's why it always looked so good."



Richard Clarke and Green in THE MASKED MARVEL (Republic, 1943).

In HAUNTED HARBOR he performed triple duty—doubling two villains, Kenne Duncan and George J. Lewis, as well as being just a "no goodnick", done in several times by Kane Richmond (or Dale Van Sickle in the long shots); ZORRO'S BLACK WHIP for John Merton, this time ***against*** hero Lewis who was doubled now by Van Sickle; then back again for Lewis, the "brain heavy" in FEDERAL OPERATOR 99, battling Van Sickle standing in for hero Marten Lamont. "We changed clothes and parts faster than a chameleon alters the colors of its skin," Duke recalled. "We worked twelve to fourteen hours a day, six days a week. It was a lot of work but we had fun because of the great people we were associated with."

Duke departed from the serials for a time, returning to do stunts and fights in such as THE BLACK WIDOW (Spencer Bennet's last at Republic, 1947), G-MEN NEVER FORGET (1948) and THE JAMES BROTHERS OF MISSOURI (1950).

Anthony Warde, Green, Virginia Lindley and Bruce Edwards in THE BLACK WIDOW (Republic, 1947).

Green, George J. Lewis, Allan Lane, Duncan Renaldo and Linda Stirling in THE TIGER WOMAN (Republic, 1944).

Green and Allan Lane in DAREDEVILS OF THE WEST (Republic, 1943).

In 1950 Warner Brothers made "The Flame and the Arrow", a knights in armor swashbuckler with Burt Lancaster and Virginia Mayo. Duke was called upon to perform a tense bit of action, as a soldier of evil nobleman, Robert Douglas. The stunt was simple for a crack stuntman like the Duke. He was to run along a forest pathway, catch his foot in a snare which would snap upright whipping him off his feet, turn him upside down, and pull him about twenty feet into the air. Fine, only something went wrong! The rigger let a little detail slip by. What happened ended a career as a professional stuntman spanning more than twenty five years—"ten thousand" fights, chases, rides and the like. The rigging from the platform above broke, and Duke Green hurtled headfirst to the ground. There is no need to go into the long, drawn out painful series of operations that followed. Fusing of the spine, a broken neck that should have killed him three times over, and months and months of agonizing convalescence.

There was no insurance, either. In those days no company would cover a stuntman figuring the risks too high and any payoff too much. And the studio . . . what of them? From the director on down—over fifty people on the set—nobody saw a thing. Not a thing!!!! All Duke got was his workman's compensation. Oh, his medical bills were taken care of, but his days as one of the top men in his profession had come to a premature end.

But Duke Green was not bitter. That just wasn't his style. When he was able to walk again many months later, he did extra (not stunt) work until his retirement a few years ago. Unlike so many in the industry, Duke saved and invested wisely, and nobody will have to take up a collection for him. He and his wife, Hilda, live in a comfortable section of North Hollywood, not too far from Republic (now CBS-TV Center) enjoying life at its best. Perhaps the one thing Duke does even better than his stuntwork is "growing" . . . growing the most beautiful flowers, ferns and shrubs that would put any nursery to shame. Green is the name, and the "thumb" to go along with it is quite evident to anybody who passes his home.

THOSE ENDURING SERIAL FANS

Letters from TEMI fans are most welcome. However, the information supplied in these columns by readers is based on their opinions. The editor does not necessarily purport the info to be complete, exact or accurate.

ERRATUM AND ADDENDA

Re: ZORRO'S FIGHTING LEGION. On page 270, upper right-hand photo, that's Cactus Mack behind the tied-and-gagged Volita.

John Reading
Chicago, Illinois

The actor who played Detective Hemingway in THE HURRICANE EXPRESS (pg. 278) was James Burtis (not Brutis).

Supplement to the George J. Lewis story (pg. 273): His last serial roles were as Mexican police officer "Manuel" in RADIO PATROL VS. SPY KING (Rep., 1950) and as villain "Mort Black" in CODY OF THE PONY EXPRESS (Col., 1950).

Check your picture of Don del Oro confronting Zorro and Kala (Paul Marian) on page 272. I am certain that the Indian at extreme right (with bow and arrow) is Jay Silverheels.

Bob Pepe
Queens Village, N.Y.

Editor's Note: The spelling of the actor's name who played Kala was shown correctly in TEMI, Paul Marion. However, it was misspelled in the film's credits. So the error rests with Republic. Marion's name is correctly spelled in Republic's MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR SATAN listing (on screen) of supporting players.

* * *

SERIAL MUSIC

In answer to Mr. R. Easton (pg. 199), the background music for the titles and credits of THE PHANTOM EMPIRE is one of the following: "Ballet Music for Don Juan" or "Ballet Music for Orfeo ed Euridice," both by Christoph Gluck. He mentioned Liszt's "Les Preludes". This was also used in UNDERSEA KINGDOM.

Thomas Underwood, Jr.
Arlington, Virginia

* * *

BATMAN

I especially enjoyed the article on George J. Lewis (pg. 273). Prominent among his unbilled serial roles was his part as one of the heavies in Columbia's BATMAN (1943). Only four players received screen credit on this serial: Lewis Wilson (Batman, Bruce Wayne), Douglas Croft (Robin, Dick Grayson), J. Carrol Naish (Dr. Daka) and Shirley Patterson (Linda). Other serial regulars who went unbilled included Charles Middleton, Charles Wilson, Robert Fiske and Michael Vallon.

Charles McCleary
Los Angeles, Calif.

Editor's Note: Sadly, actor J. Carrol Naish died on January 24, 1973. He was born on January 21, 1897, so he would have been 76. He was a versatile character actor, and alternated successfully between being a good guy and a guy bent on skulduggery, even murder.

ENIGMA

Following the tribute to Boris Karloff made by the Royal Film Archive of Belgium, last November, I intend, with some friends, to publish a critical study on the films made by B.K.

We had the opportunity to see two episodes from a serial made by Karloff: KING OF THE WILD. We should like to add to our book the chapter titles, but we can't find them anywhere (not even in TEMI).

Mlle Jacqueline Martin
Brussels, Belgium

Editor's Note: KING OF THE WILD was covered briefly in the very first TEMI, page 4. Listed here are the omitted chapter titles.

The stars of this 1931 Mascot serial were Walter Miller and Nora Lane. Karloff received fifth billing. When reissued some years later (lobby card, above) Miller's and Lane's popularity had diminished and the now popular B.K.'s name went to the top.

McLaglen was the brother of Academy Award winner ("The Informer", 1935) Victor McLaglen.

CHAPTER TITLES

1. Man Eaters
2. The Tiger of Destiny
3. The Avenging Horde
4. The Secret of the Volcano
5. The Pit of Peril
6. The Creeping Doom
7. Sealed Lips
8. The Jaws of the Jungle
9. The Door of Dread
10. The Leopard's Lair
11. The Fire of the Gods
12. Jungle Justice

J. Carrol Naish's only other serial besides BATMAN was THE MYSTERY SQUADRON (Mascot, 1933), scene above. L. to R. are Edward Hearn, Naish, Bob Steele and Lucile Browne.

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